(c) by when these services are likely to be made operative;

(d) whether it is a fact that private operators are not interested to introduce their services in these areas; and

(e) if so, the action being taken by Government against such operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Several scheduled and non-scheduled airlines operate small aircraft to destinations in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and the North East Region. While Alliance Air, Air Deccan and Jagson Airlines operate small aircraft to various destinations in Himachal Pradesh, Alliance Air, Air Deccan and Kingfisher Airlines operate small aircraft to various destinations in the North East Region. Air services to Dehradun in Uttarakhand are temporarily suspended due to runway extension work in-progress at the airport. Alliance Air plans to lease-in additional small aircraft to extend connectivity to various parts of the country. Further, Airports Authority of India has developed small airports like Dharamshala, Kullu etc. to facilitate operations by small aircraft to such destinations.

(d) Private airlines are operating to these areas as outlined above.

(e) Government has laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country, including North East region. It is, however, upto the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. As such, the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of route dispersal guidelines issued by Government.

Criteria for price-fixation of gas from KG basin

*66. SHRI D. RAJA:
SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been concerns voiced by certain quarters about the pricing of natural gas to be extracted from Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin by Reliance Industries Ltd.;

(b) if so, what is the criteria adopted in fixing the prices of natural gas being extracted by Reliance from KG basin; and

(c) what is the Government's reaction to the concerns being expressed by certain quarters?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Production Sharing Contract (PSC) provides for pricing of gas on the basis of sales on arms length principles. The formula or basis on which the prices shall be determined for the purposes of determining the Government take is required to be approved by the Government prior to sale of natural gas to the consumers/buyers. Accordingly, RIL submitted a proposal on 18.5.07 for approval of gas price formula which was arrived at by following a bidding process.

After taking into account the concerns voiced in some quarters regarding pricing of gas from KG Basin Block of RIL, the Government took the action of constituting an Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) to consider and decide the issues of gas pricing and commercial utilization of gas under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). EGoM considered the price basis/formula submitted by RIL and decided the issue of pricing of gas under NELP.

EGoM has decided that the price basis/formula submitted by M/s RIL-NIKO under Article 21.6.3 of the PSC for valuation of natural gas may be accepted with modifications.

Financial assistance for conservation of monuments in A.P.

*67. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals received in the Ministry from Andhra Pradesh Government for financial assistance for the conservation of monuments of historical/cultural value, indicating the location-wise details of each project;

(b) the estimated conservation cost of each monument;

(c) the status of these proposals and funds allocated/released so far for each of these monuments; and

(d) the reasons for delay in clearing these proposals?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) No such proposals have been received by the Ministry of Culture. However, Ministry of Tourism (MoT) has received a proposal from Government of Andhra Pradesh for Development of Golkonda-Qutub Shahi Complex, which includes Hakimpet, Shaikpet Sarai, K.B. Museum and Premamathi Mosque, located in Hyderabad. The estimated cost of this project is Rs. 600.85 lakhs out of which the Central Component of Rs. 500.00 lakhs and the State component is Rs. 100.85 lakhs. In addition, a proposal has been received by MoT for Conservation and Development of City College Building at Hyderabad for an amount of Rs. 278.00 lakhs in the current financial year.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has sanctioned the Central component of Rs. 500.00 lakhs for the development of Golkonda-Qutab Shahi Complex in 2006-07 out of which an amount of Rs. 400.00 lakhs has already been released. The proposal of City College Building is under consideration. There is no delay in clearing the projects.

Shortage of LPG connections in Himachal Pradesh

*68. SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a shortage of LPG connections in the country for a long period;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when it would be solved;

(c) whether it is also a fact that in the State of Himachal Pradesh, particularly people of Jubbal-Kolkhai Rohru and Chirgaon Tehsil are facing lot of difficulties, as this area is hilly and rural; and

(d) if so, by when these problems would be solved?

THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) and (b) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have not reported any shortage of LPG connections in the country. As on 1.10.2007, OMCs are serving 979.8 lakhs LPG customers through their 9355 LPG distributorships, out of which 12.12 lakhs LPG customers and 120 LPG distributors are in the State of Himachal Pradesh. OMCs have released 27.7 lakhs new LPG domestic connections in the country during April-September, 2007.

OMCs have reported a waiting list of only 68813 in certain States/Union Territories as on 1.11.2007 for release of new domestic LPG connections with their LPG distributors because of backlog in supplies due to road breaches, floods, natural calamities and strikes which are beyond the control of the OMCs. This waiting list is expected to be liquidated by 15th December, 2007.